



Written Testimony before the Public Health Committee

March 12, 2010

In SUPPORT of S. B. No. 402 AN ACT CONCERNING THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

Sen. Harris, Rep. Ritter and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on **S. B. No. 402 AN ACT CONCERNING THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP**

DSS supports the proposal to provide the Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council ("Oversight Council") with the authority to oversee the new Medicaid FFS behavioral health initiative that the Department of Social Services (DSS) is undertaking with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). For more than four years, the Oversight Council has provided effective oversight of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and DSS in their administration of the managed behavioral health initiative for the HUSKY A, HUSKY B and DCF populations. The Oversight Council structure, including its various subcommittees, has been an active partner in the development and review of Behavioral Health Partnership policies, quality improvement initiatives, and payment reforms and this has done a great deal to ensure the program's success. This proposed bill provides a similar opportunity for the administration of the Medicaid FFS population. It also would support greater uniformity and efficiencies (e.g., one set of clinical management guidelines) across the HUSKY, Medicaid, Charter Oak and CHIP programs. Finally, it will allow us to better address gaps in the system, such as with respect to transitions between the child and adult service systems.

While we are generally supportive, our top priority is to avoid any disruption in the work of the Oversight Council and its subcommittees with respect to the existing Behavioral Health Partnership. This work depends on the overall structure, but also the working relationships that have been developed between state agency staff and Oversight Council members.

We are evaluating the proposed language and intend to meet to discuss these proposed changes with DCF and DMHAS. It is our goal to have specific recommendations for the Human Services Committee in the very near future.

We look forward to working with you as this issue moves forward and thank you for your time and attention to this matter